

THE DANCE OF DEATH

or

"Creatures in various stages of decay, like a Victorian marching band in satin uniforms of lavender, purple and black, dance to an eerie waltz. The gruesome remnants celebrate a gay past with a New Orleans dirge."

EXCERPT from THE MEDIUM

Dr. Abrahms probes Paul a little further . . .

"Do you remember any of the dreams?"

Paul does not hesitate, "I'll never forget the one I had at four. It influenced the rest of my life. It's the reason I hate horror movies and Halloween. I have since learned that her mom's family used to vacation upstate at a Lake Hiawatha, near the Canadian border. Gloria, Olivia's mom, have I mentioned her name before?"

"-- I think so . . . maybe not."

"Gloria would go every summer with her family to play in the natural wonders of this mythological lake. It was kidney shaped with many spooky stories that go back as far as its Indian origins. It was very deep in the middle. There have been tales of many huge twenty foot, thousand pound sturgeons lurking in the deep. Unfortunately, many vacationing fisherman have died trying to catch the leviathan fish. On the near end of the lake was a beautiful white beach with diving boards, lifeguard towers and docks lining the right side.

Children would frolic under the watchful eyes of their anxious mothers on the grassy dunes. The dunes wrapped around the end of the lake. They monitored their children as if they were taking a

oblivious excursion into hell. Only when the children returned to the beach, would the mother's take a deep breath of relief. It was considered a dangerous place of random sorrow."

The good Doctor seemed to be genuinely interested in Paul's tale born of his dreams, for the obvious therapeutic reasons, but also for his personal interest in a damn good yarn!

"That's very poetic, almost like you've been there. Have you?"

"No . . . only in my dreams. But, it was as real as it can get and it's a place of dread."

"Then these dreams were nightmares? What do you think they were trying to express?"

"Olivia told me how her mother almost drowned at eight. Gloria insists that she felt something grab her foot and drag her down. She felt many hands pulling her down when two life guards pulled her in. It was a life and death struggle with the unknown. She was laid on the beach not breathing. Her heart had stopped and the life guards were giving up.

Gloria's mother ran in from the dunes and frantically did CPR. Finally, she began to breathe. Her mother swore an oath to g-d as she cried bitter tears. Gloria was never allowed in the water again but became a phantom of the dunes."

"What about the dreams? Did they continue . . . Phantom?"

"I only remember one . . .

An eight year old girl stands in the tall grass of the dunes. She is always there like an apparition. She watches the young children

playing in the water, she yearns to join them . . .

Forbidden from the water, a very lonely, sad young girl turns and walks up the hill. At the crest of the dune is an abandoned fun house. It was built in the Victorian times and is now falling apart. It has faded circus art all over the exterior. It looked surreal because of the gay subjects depicted that are now in a state of decay. The funhouse was constructed of wooden planks that were nailed together at odd angles. It was a curiosity, but forbidding with its boarded windows and doors.

The little girl is frightened but drawn to it. At the top of the hill she sees a small gap in the boarding and squeezes through the opening.

She stands up inside the structure and dusts off her pretty dress from the dirt picked up from crawling in. She gapes at the cavernous interior and we notice for the first time that this is an eight year old Gloria.

The huge, shadowy structure is illuminated only by the pencil beams of light that are made by the small gaps between the uneven planks constructed in a jumbled pattern. The pinpoint streams of sunlight add to the confusion by creating a crazy light maze with no right angles and uneven shapes.

She gawks at the treadmills, teeter totters and chutes along the walls. Gloria is horrified by the endless line of specters walking zombie-like on these structures. They do a death-walk off the ends and free-fall a few floors until they thud on mattresses and turn to

dust. A plume of dust flies up as each of these creatures hit the mattresses.

On the cavernous dirt floor is planted a tall May-pole with pastel colored streamers surrounding it. Skeletal undead reach up to hold the streamers and slowly march to a around the pole to an unearthly waltz. Creatures in various stages of decay, in satin uniforms of lavender, purple and black like an 1890's marching band, rejoice as gruesome reminders of a gay past with a New Orleans dirge.

A ringmaster is standing to the side directing the revelry with a gold baton that he waggles up and down to the beat of the music. His skeletal face and rotting flesh was grotesque, but offset by his Victorian bandleaders outfit in lavender and purple satin with black and gold accents topped off by gold braid over one shoulder. He's wearing a purple satin two-corner hat with gold braid and a luxurious gold belt. He was a macabre vision put to music.

The little girl watched with odd fascination, frozen by the bizarre sites never seen before. Unnoticed till now, her eyes locked with the ringmaster's and the trance was broken. Now in mortal fear she scrambled under the planked skirt of the fun house and ran into the sunlight."

Original Novel
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